WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A shape retaining fishing lure comprising:

a. an elongated, flexible, shape-retaining wire body having a predetermined configuration and being formed of a semielastic alloy comprising 45 to 49 % titanium, not more than about 42 % nickel, and from about 8% to about 10% of other metals including copper at a concentration of about 5.5% to about 7.5 %, iron at a concentration of from about one to about three percent, and less than about two percent of chromium;

b. a fish hook operatively attached to a first end of the wire body and at least one fish attracting element attached to the wire body between the fish hook and a second end of the wire body; and

c. attachment means carried by the wire body adapted for attaching the lure to a fishing line or leader.

2. The shape retaining fishing lure of claim 1 further comprising a leader including a core body having a straight length of the shape memory semielastic alloy, the body having attachment loops at each end of the core body so as to fasten the leader to the fishing line and the lure.

3. The shape retaining fishing lure of claim 1 wherein the wire body has a substantially straight predetermined configuration.

4. The shape retaining fishing lure of claim 1 wherein the wire body has a center portion permanently bent back upon itself to form two legs defining a bight, with the legs diverging therefrom, the bight having an upper portion and a lower portion and being formed by bending the wire body through an angle that

exceeds 180°, the legs having confronting, substantially engaging surfaces at the mouth of the bight, the substantially engaging surface allowing generated forces upon the lure to be transmitted from one leg to the other through the substantially engaging surface rather than involving significant elastic movement of the loop.

5. The shape retaining fishing lure of claim 4 wherein said substantially engaging surfaces are planar to restrain such surfaces from slipping past each other as the wire body is flexed.

6. The shape retaining fishing lure of claim 4 wherein the center portion is bent such that the bight consists of a generally R-shaped loop.

7. The shape retaining fishing lure of claim 6 wherein each leg is bent away from the other at the mouth of the bight, the minimum radius of curvature of said bend of one leg being substantially greater than that of the other leg.

8. The shape retaining fishing lure of claim 5 wherein the minimum radius of curvature of said one leg is at least twice that of the other leg.

9. The shape retaining fishing lure of claim 5 wherein the wire body forming said engaging surfaces is generally rectangular in cross-section.

10. The shape retaining fishing lure of claim 5 wherein the wire body forming said engaging surfaces is generally triangular in cross-section.

11. The shape retaining fishing lure of claim 9 wherein said rectangular cross-section is defined by two pairs of parallel, opposing sides of unequal width, the sides of lesser width defining said engaging surfaces.

12. A shape retaining fishing lure comprising:

a. an elongated, flexible, shape retaining wire body, the wire body being formed of a shape memory alloy, the body having a substantially closed R-shaped bight adapted for attachment to a fishing line and formed by permanently bending the wire back upon itself through an angle that exceeds 180° to form first and second divergent legs extending from a top and a bottom end of the R-shaped bight;

b. a fish hook operatively attached to the first leg and at least one fish attracting element attached to the second leg; and

whereby downward force generated on the lure as it is pulled through the water is distributed on the bottom end of the R-shaped loop so that the loop remains substantially closed, said shape memory alloy comprising a semielastic alloy comprising 45 to 49 % titanium, not more than about 42 % nickel, and from about 8% to about 10% of other metals including copper at a concentration of about 5.5% to about 7.5 %, iron at a concentration of from about one to about three percent, and less than about two percent of chromium.

13. The shape retaining fishing lure of claim 12 wherein the first divergent leg includes a first length and a second length, the second length extending at an angle of about 45° from the first length.

14. A shape retaining fishing lure comprising:

a. an elongated, flexible, shape retaining wire body, the wire body being formed of a shape memory alloy to enable the wire body to elastically regain a predetermined configuration after being deformed, the body having a substantially closed bight to which may be attached a fishing line and that is formed by permanently bending the wire back upon itself through an angle that exceeds 180° to form first and second divergent legs; the legs having substantially engaging flat confronting surfaces adjacent the bight;

b. a fish hook operatively attached to the first leg and at least one fish attracting element attached to the second leg; and

whereby the flat surfaces engage each other when the lure is pulled through the water to rigidify the lure, the flat surfaces restraining the legs from sliding past each other.

15. The shape retaining fishing lure of claim 14 wherein the shape memory superelastic alloy comprises not greater than about twenty percent nickel, about thirty percent chromium and the remainder titanium.

16. The shape retaining fishing lure of claim 14 wherein the shape memory superelastic alloy comprises a semielastic alloy comprising 45 to 49 % titanium, not more than about 42 % nickel, and from about 8% to about 10% of other metals including copper at a concentration of about 5.5% to about 7.5 %, iron at a concentration of from about one to about three percent, and less than about two percent of chromium.

17. The shape retaining fishing lure of claim 14 wherein said wire is rectangular in cross-section.

18. The shape retaining fishing lure of claim 17 wherein the closed bight consists of a generally R-shaped loop.

19. The shape-retaining fishing lure of claim 17 wherein said wire, in cross-section, has two pairs of parallel, opposing sides defining said rectangular shape, the narrower of said sides defining said flat, confronting surfaces.

20. The shape-retaining fishing lure of claim 19 wherein said wire body, where bent to form said bight, lies in a plane, and wherein said confronting flat surfaces are perpendicular to said plane.